

Additional Information

Tips For Observing and Photographing Dragonflies

Dragonflies can be loosely lumped into categories of “perchers” or “flyers”. Perchers, such as some of the skimmers, have a usual or favorite perch which they return to repeatedly. Some flyers have a usual route, a beat which they fly back and forth in the same area. You can pre-focus your camera or binoculars on that area to get a close look. Some have a large, long beat and are more difficult to predict, so some luck and persistence are required to find them perched. Most odonates are most active in middle of the day, but some are more active early and late, roosting most of the day in the shade. Be prepared, research and study your subjects first to know the preferred habitats. Binoculars, especially close-focus binoculars are a great aid for observing all nature subjects.

Approach slowly, getting closer and snapping away as you go (with today’s digital cameras, you can always delete later), a good distant shot is better than none and will be of some aid in identifying later.

Try to align planes of focus; for example, a side view is usually good, so move to the side for a clear side view of the dragonfly. A “3/4 view” can show face and eyes as well as the side. Some field marks are more important than others in differentiating one species from another. Get more than one angle if possible.

Sun at your back is always good for photographic detail but be ready to use flash to “fill” in the detail on the shadow side if the subject is back-lit or in any dark situation.

Dragonfly and Butterfly checklists can be downloaded from www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi/checklists/

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About ATBI

This brochure was compiled and developed by the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) group. ATBI is an on-going project in Tennessee State Parks and State Natural Areas. The goal of ATBI is to document all species in Tennessee State Parks, monitor long-term trends in specific taxonomic groups, and promote education about and preservation of all biodiversity with increased science and citizen education efforts. To access the ATBI database, go to www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi.

For more information please contact Tennessee State Parks, 7th Floor, L & C Tower, 401 Church St., Nashville, TN 37243. Email: ask.tnstateparks@tn.gov. Phone 1-888-867-2757 or 615-532-0001

Dragonfly References

Beaton, Giff. 2007. Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast. A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book.

Dunkle, Sidney. 2000. Dragonflies through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America. Oxford University Press.

Nikula, Blair et al. 2002. Stokes Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies. Little, Brown & Company.

<http://www.odonatacentral.org/>. Dragonfly Society of the Americas. This site has checklists of dragonflies by county.

Collecting of plants or animals in state parks and natural areas is prohibited. Please help preserve Tennessee's natural heritage by leaving plants and animals for others to enjoy.

ROCK ISLAND STATE PARK

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www.tn.gov/environment/parks/RockIsland

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS

All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI)



Dragonflies and Damselflies of Rock Island State Park and Warren County



Photo © Richard Connors

Welcome to the wonderful world of dragonflies at beautiful Rock Island State Park! Of the approximate 156 species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) in Tennessee 26 have been documented in this park and Warren County.

Above is a picture of a Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*), male. A common "percher", widow skimmers are found near lakes, ponds and slow sections of streams. Both males and females have the solid black wing stripes next to the body. You can remember this one by: "the Widow wears black next to the body". The female has a dark brown abdomen with a bright yellow stripe down the sides.

Damselflies (Zygoptera)

Spreadwings (Lestidae)

- ☐ Slender Spreadwing

*W ☐ Blue-fronted Dancer

- *W ☐ Variable Dancer

- W ☐ Blue-tipped Dancer

- *W ☐ Dusky Dancer

- W ☐ Familiar Bluet

- W ☐ Citrine Forktail

- *W ☐ Fragile Forktail

- W ☐ Eastern Forktail

Dragonflies (Anisoptera)

Darners (Aeshnidae)

- * ☐ Common Green Darner

Clubtails (Gomphidae)

- *W ☐ Black-shouldered Spinyleg

- *W ☐ Flag-tailed Spinyleg

- *W ☐ Handsome Clubtail

Spiketails (Cordulegastriidae)

- *W ☐ Tiger Spiketail

Emeralds (Corduliidae)

- * ☐ Prince Baskettail

Skimmers (Libellulidae)

- W ☐ Calico Pennant

- *W ☐ Eastern Pondhawk

- *W ☐ Slaty Skimmer

- w ☐ Widow Skimmer

- *W ☐ Blue Dasher

- ☐ Spot-winged Glider

- * ☐ Eastern Amberwing

- *W ☐ Common Whitetail

- W ☐ Blue-faced Meadowhawk

- ☐ Carolina Saddlebags

- * ☐ Black Saddlebags

Documented from:

- * Rock Island State Park

- W Warren County—County records
obtained from OdonataCentral

Habitat

Rock Island State Park is on the Caney Fork River, at the upper end of Center Hill lake. The Caney Fork joins the Collins River just as they come off the Eastern Highland rim. They first are contained by the old Great Falls dam and lake before entering the valley that has become Center Hill lake. Great Falls dam has created the spectacular Twin Falls by sending water through the cave-like fissures of the local karst geology.

Good spots

*Along the edge of the lake and in lakeside vegetation.

*Along river, on exposed rocks and in vegetation.

*At seeps along bluff.

*Open areas / fields and along the edges of these open areas / fields.

Notes: